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ABSTRACT

The 1981 White House Conference on Aging, particularly the 50 State Conferences on Aging, generated over 1,500 pages of data on aging, addressing over 3,000 issues. To summarize the information from the 16 Technical Committee reports, a conceptual framework was used which focused on the well being of older people in three dimensions - health, economic, and social. Of the 267 areas of concern 248 specifically focused on these three dimensions. The remaining 19 areas applied to all three dimensions and related to defining government roles, and involving public agencies and older people in setting goals, managing services, and advocacy. Health concerns comprized 67 of the 248 concerns; the major area of concern was long-term care. There were 84 economic concerns identified. Employment was the major issue followed by social security, housing, retirement, and family care. Social concerns accounted for 97 of the 248. Quality of life ranked first, followed by integrated services, transportation, communication, legal services, education, and crime. In addition to the 16 Technical Reports, major areas of concern were analyzed from the conference reports of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Navajo Nation, and the Territories. The state areas of concern paralleled those of the Technical Committees. (JAC)

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WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON AGING LITERATURE: A GOLD MINE OF ISSUES FOR THE 1980

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CG 016893

Presented at 35th Annual Scientific Meeting of the Gerontological Society of America on November 23, 1982 in Boston, Massachusetts.

ABSTRACT

The White House Conference on Aging generated a wealth of data on issues in the field of aging particularly the 50 State Conferences on Aging. Over 1500 pages of narrative containing over 3000 issues are contained in these state reports. The data, however, is buried in these reports and is not easily summarized.

We developed a conceptual model focusing on the well being of older people containing three dimensions--health, economic, and social. We were successful in developing an information system on these issues.

In health, the major area of concern was long term care; in economic, employment; and in social, quality of life. Most areas of concern we found will have a budget impact. In the health dimension, long term care means expanded coverage and health research requires funding. Further, in the economic dimension, employment means longer worklife and social security demands status quo. And finally, in the social dimension, a holistic approach means increased use of services.

OVERVIEW

The 16 Technical Committee reports to the White House Conference on Aging were our sources of the areas of concern in the field of aging. We used these reports because the final results of the White House Conference on Aging would not be available until June 1982. The technical reports contain the consolidated knowledge of 118 experts appointed to the Committees by the Secretary of Health and Human Services. Their multidisciplinary backgrounds and extensive experience in the field of aging enabled them to summarize the areas of concern in the field of aging.

In summarizing the 267 areas of concern contained in the 16 Committee reports, we used a conceptual framework involving the whole person. This framework allowed us to focus in a meaningful and understandable way on the whole person by arranging the areas of concern on the dimensions of the well being of older people--health, economic, and social.

Of the 267 areas of concern, 248 specifically focused on the three dimensions health, economic, and social. The remaining 19 applied to all three dimensions and related to (1) defining Federal and State roles and (2) involving state and local agencies, advisory boards, and older people in setting goals and managing services and advocacy. In health, the major area of concern was long term care; in economic, employment; and in social, quality of life. (See Appendix I).

Most areas of concern will have a budget impact. In the health dimension, long term care means expanded coverage; health research requires funding, and in-home services means providing more services. Further, in the economic dimension, employment means longer worklife, social security demands status quo, and housing requires funding. And finally, in the social dimension, a holistic approach means increased use of services, and transportation and legal services need funding.

The areas of concern of the states paralleled those of the Technical Committees. Their top 10 major areas of concern were (1) transportation, (2) housing, (3) employment, (4) social security reform, (5) Medicare/Medicaid, (6) long term care, (7) in-home health care, (8) energy costs, (9) in-house services, and (10) crime. (See Appendix II).

WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON AGING

TECHNICAL COMMITTEES' CONCERNS

HEALTH CONCERNS

	Action to be taken:					
	Who			How		
Category	Federal	State	Local	Legislation	Budget	Organization
Long term care						
--Coverage	X			X	X	
--Single payment system	X			X	X	
--Case management			X			X
Health care						
--Coverage	X	X		X	X	
--Method of payment	X	X			X	
Health research						
--Coordination	X	X				X
--Funding	X				X	
In-home services						
--Provision	X	X	X	X	X	
--Self help			X			X
Health assessment						
--Coordination			X			X
--Demonstrations	X				X	
Family care						
--Provision			X		X	X
Quality care						
--Monitor			X			X
Nutrition						
--Education			X			X
Health corps						
--Establish	X			X	X	

WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON AGING

TECHNICAL COMMITTEES' CONCERNS

ECONOMIC CONCERNS

Category	Action to be taken: Who			How		
	Federal	State	Local	Legislation	Budget	Organization
Employment						
--Worklife	X		X		X	
--Jobs	X	X	X		X	
--Discrimination	X	X	X			X
Social Security						
--Status quo	X			X	X	
--Single system	X			X	X	
Housing						
--Houses	X			X	X	
--Financial incentives	X			X	X	
Retirement						
--Mandatory age	X			X	X	
--Flexibility	X			X	X	
Family care						
--Tax incentives	X			X	X	

WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON AGING

TECHNICAL COMMITTEES' CONCERNS

SOCIAL CONCERNS

	Action to be taken:					
	Who			How		
Category	Federal	State	Local	Legislation	Budget	Organization
Quality of life						
--Intergenerational contacts			X			X
--Cultural recognition			X			X
Integrated services						
--Holistic approach	X				X	
Transportation						
--Provision	X				X	
Communication						
--Image	X		X			X
Legal services						
--Provision	X			X	X	
Crime						
--Awareness	X		X			X

WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON AGING

TECHNICAL COMMITTEES

BACKGROUND

The White House Conference on Aging derived from an Act authorizing the President to call an aging conference in 1981 to develop further research and actions needed in the field of aging. The 1981 White House Conference on Aging Act set forth more substantive needs or policy areas:

--Improved economic well-being of older people.

--Increased availability of comprehensive and quality health care for older people.

--Expanded availability of appropriate housing with supportive services to promote increased independence of older people.

--Increased comprehensive and effective social service delivery system for older people.

--Greater employment opportunities for middle-aged and older individuals.

--Improved long-term care policy (more comprehensive and responsive).

--Develop a national retirement policy contributing to fulfillment, dignity, and satisfaction of retirement.

--Overcome false stereotypes about aging and the process of aging.

--Increased bromedical and other appropriate research through establishment of a national policy.

To assist the delegates, 16 Technical Committees were appointed to develop issue papers. The Secretary of Health and Human Services appointed experts from various fields (118 people) to serve on these Committees. Each expert was charged with developing issues and recommendations in a particular area for consideration as background material for the delegates to the Conference. The 16 Technical Committees were as follows.

Retirement Income
Health Maintenance and Health Promotion
Health Services
Social and Health Aspects of Long Term Care

Family, Social Services and Other Support Systems
The Physical and Social Environment and Quality of Life
Older Americans as A Growing National Resource
Employment
Creating an Age Integrated Society: Implications for Societal Institutions
Creating an Age Integrated Society: Implications for the Economy
Creating an Age Integrated Society: Implications for the Educational Systems
Creating an Age Integrated Society: Implications for Spiritual Well-Being
Creating an Age Integrated Society: Implications for the Family
Creating an Age Integrated Society: Implications for the Media
Creating an Age Integrated Society: Implications for Governmental Structures
Research in Aging

The 56-member Advisory Committee to the Conference, appointed to help shape the Conference's work, suggested the broad issue areas described in the title of each of these Committees. The 16 Technical Committees met and wrote their reports during the period August 1980 through February 1981. They made the reports available to the delegates and observers who participated in the White House Conference on Aging in December 1981.

METHODOLOGY

The Technical Committee reports were our sources of the areas of concern in the field of aging. We used these reports because the final results of the White House Conference on Aging would not be available until June 1982. The technical reports contain the consolidated knowledge of the 118 experts. Their multidisciplinary backgrounds and extensive experience in the field of aging enabled them to summarize the areas of concern in the field of aging.

In summarizing the 267 areas of concern contained in the 16 Committee reports, we used a conceptual framework involving the whole person. This framework allowed us to focus in a meaningful and understandable way on the whole person by arranging the areas of concern on the dimensions of the well being of older people--health, economic, and social. Our report "Conditions of Older People: National Information System Needed" (HRD-79-95 dated September 20, 1979) describes this framework in detail.

AREAS OF CONCERN

Of the 267 areas of concern, 248 specifically focused on the three dimensions health, economic, and social. The remaining 19 applied to all three dimensions and related to (1) defining Federal and State roles and (2) involving state and local agencies, advisory boards, and older people in setting goals and managing services and advocacy.

In health, the major area of concern was long term care; in economic, employment; and in social, quality of life. The ranking of the areas of concern by dimension follows.

Areas of concern by dimension	Number of citations in the 16 reports	Ranking without regard to dimension
Health		
Long term care	18	4
Health care	11	11
Health research	9	13
In-home services	8	14
Health assessment	6	15
Family health care	6	16
Quality care	3	19
Nutrition	3	20
Health corps	3	21
Sub-total	67	
Economic		
Employment	36	1
Social Security	20	3
Housing	12	8
Retirement	12	9
Family care	4	18
Sub-total	84	
Social		
Quality life	26	2
Integrated services	16	5
Transportation	15	6
Communication	13	7
Legal services	12	10
Education	10	12
Crime	5	17
Sub-total	97	
Total	248	

WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON AGING
STATE CONFERENCES

BACKGROUND

In preparation for the 1981 White House Conference on Aging scheduled for November 30-December 3, 1981, the governors of each state were invited to designate a White House Conference on Aging Coordinator who would serve as liaison in the planning and implementation of all pre-conference activities at the local and state levels. These activities began in 1980, with a series of community forums involving thousands of people of all ages who came together to discuss the concerns of older Americans. The forums were sponsored by a wide range of interested organizations as well as Area Agencies on Aging, and were held in a variety of settings across the country. In each state, the views and opinions generated at these forums were forwarded to the convenors of the state White House Conferences on Aging.

State White House Conferences on Aging were held in each of the states and territories, and by the Navajo Nation from September 1980 through June 1981. The state conferences allowed citizens, organizations, and government leaders to examine the quality of life for older Americans within each state and to analyze the capacity of existing programs and social institutions that serve the needs of this special population. Organized by the state coordinators, and in some cases by state steering committees, the state conferences were designed so that the views of the local and the state citizenry might be assimilated in order to prepare formal recommendations for the National Meeting.

OVERVIEW

We analyzed the major areas of concern in the conference reports for the 50 States, District of Columbia, Navajo Nation and territories. These reports were provided to the White House Conference on Aging delegates and observers.

The major issues of concern for 10 or more of the locations are shown in the following table.

Area of concern	Number of locations
Transportation	48
Housing	41
Employment	33
Social security reform	33
Medicare/Medicaid	29
Long term care	23
In-home health care	22
Energy costs	19
In-home services	18
Crime	16
Coordination of services	16
Inflation	15
Education	13
National health insurance	13
Tax reform	13
Intergenerational planning and education	13
Social services	12
Nutrition	12
Pensions	11
Gerontology training	11
Senior volunteer opportunities	10